

Stamford School Readiness Council
Parent Outreach Committee Meeting
January 24, 2013
12:00-1:00 p.m.
United Way of Western CT, 1150 Summer Street, 2nd Floor

MEETING SUMMARY

Attendees

Donna Arcuri	School Readiness Liaison, Mayor's Office, City of Stamford
Karen Brennan	Stamford Discovery Coordinator, United Way of Western CT
Jennifer Hallissey	Vice President of Education, United Way of Western CT
Deborah List, Co-Chair	Parent
Keiah Minott, Co-Chair	Parent
Michele Sabia	Curriculum Associate for Early Childhood Education, Stamford Public Schools
Caroline Ward	Youth Services Director, Ferguson Library

Instead of a full meeting of the Parent Outreach Committee, we held a small meeting with the co-chairs and special guests as a follow up to our October brainstorming meeting.

Kindergarten Information Nights

In response to last year's very successful Kindergarten Information Night at the Ferguson Library, Michele Sabia again agreed to run a night for the general public on Wednesday, January 30. Keiah agreed to help secure childcare for the night.

2013 Play and Learn Nights

We will be repeating our very successful Play and Learn Nights this spring. We discussed the following details:

- We will host three nights—May 9 (to be confirmed, but we hope to be at the Yerwood Center), May 23 (Ferguson Library), and June 13 (Maple Avenue/Domus).
- We will require registrations for all three nights in order to cap attendance at 50 participants.
- We will have coloring sheets and crayons, and possibly have a book cart with books to read for children who finish the activity stations early. Then will do a short story time with the children while Michele meets with their parents to answer questions.
- Michele was able to secure the funding necessary for the three Play and Learn Nights through the Grants Office. This will cover the costs of materials, teacher stipends, and other supplies we will need to run each night.
- We will recruit teachers from as many of the elementary schools as possible and will also use the Instructional Coordinators as well.
- We are working with the Junior League of Stamford-Norwalk to recruit volunteer help for both material assembly and event coordination the program nights.

Early Childhood Program Information

Karen shared the Norwalk Early Childhood Council Guide to Preschool Programs, a detailed print description of preschool programs offered in Norwalk and their contact information. This guide is offered in both English and Spanish. Our group discussed the merits of possibly producing something along these lines and agreed that we need to be doing a better job getting parents to access 2-1-1 given that they keep preschool information up-to-date. Jennifer shared the 2-1-1 brochure information with the group and we promised to use these more in any event we participate in. We also want to reach out to the CT Moms group to see what they produce.

Summer Learning Loss Brainstorming

The Committee expressed interest in expanding our focus to older children experiencing summer learning loss (to date we have focused on those children leaving pre-school and entering Kindergarten).

Caroline Ward from the Ferguson Library joined us and provided an overview of the Library's summer reading program. Typically they register 3000 participants, about 600 of which are teens. About three years ago they began registering participants online and saw a huge increase in participation. One area for improvement is the Library's relationship with the Stamford Public School system. Unlike in years past, SPS does not work with the Library to create summer reading lists and as a result there is often a disconnect to what the Library is recommending and what SPS is requiring. Michele is going to investigate.

It was also suggested that we help community centers and camps understand the summer reading program and that we help them to support it with the use of Book Buddies (volunteers who work at the Library and read to children once or twice a week). The idea of convening an event to inform and educate this group was offered. In addition, we discussed using volunteers (possibly from the Library's intern program or that the United Way Volunteer Center recruits) to visit summer programs and camps and read to the children. We agreed to revisit all these ideas at our next meeting.